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SUBJECT: HARIRI ADVISOR: CHIRAC DETERMINED TO PURSUE
CHAPTER VII

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: President Chirac has concluded that there is no way to establish the International Tribunal for Lebanon other than via Chapter VII action by the UNSC, and will exert all his influence to make that happen before leaving office next month, according to Basile Yared, the Paris-based advisor to Saad Hariri. Yared, who enjoys excellent access to the Elysee, said Chirac believes Moscow will cooperate in the end, especially if the U.S. and France remain in lockstep. Yared was dismissive of the French MFA for being overly cautious and therefore out of the loop on Lebanon policy; he also criticized Lebanese PM Siniora for "being afraid" of pressing too hard for UNSC action. End summary.

¶2. (S) Poloff met April 12 with Basile Yared, Saad Hariri's representative in Paris. Yared, who enjoys excellent access to the Elysee, said that President Chirac has concluded that "there is no alternative to Chapter VII" in order to establish the International Tribunal for Lebanon. Consequently, Chirac will exert all his influence to ensure UNSC action on Chapter VII before leaving office next month. Yared acknowledged that the Lebanese opposition's strategy has been to run down the clock on Chirac's presidency, but said there was ample time for Chirac to succeed. "Chirac has three weeks, and UNSCR 1559 took exactly 20 days," said Yared.

¶3. (S) Yared said Chirac is persuaded that he can ultimately persuade Russian President Putin to support UNSC action, so long as the US and France remain in lockstep. Chirac plans to personally negotiate this with Putin, cutting both the French and Russian foreign ministries out of the equation. (Yared seized the opportunity to blast the Quai d'Orsay for being unsupportive of Chirac's Lebanon policy in general, and for being particularly timid on Chapter VII.) Yared added that Chirac planned to use an April 12 meeting with South African President Mbeki to argue that South Africa needs to stop looking at the Tribunal issue through "its usual anti-American prism."

¶4. (S) Yared will meet with Chirac and his NSA-equivalent, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, on April 13 to discuss next steps. Yared opined that US engagement would be critical in securing the support of Egyptian President Mubarak and Saudi King Abdallah for a Chapter VII resolution, and that the U.S., Egypt and Saudi Arabia would all need to lean hard on Qatar. "At the very least, the Qataris should abstain," said Yared.

¶5. (S) Comment: We concur with Yared's assessment that the MFA remains enormously reluctant to vigorously pursue a

Chapter VII resolution, and will likely prove even more difficult once Chirac leaves office. If Chapter VII is indeed our only option, then better to pursue it as energetically as possible while Chirac is still in a position to help.

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